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# House of Commons Debates.

THIRD SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT.

## SPEECH OF MR. LAURIER, M.P.

ON

# THE BUDGET

TUESDAY, 28th FEBRUARY, 1893.

Mr. LAURIER. I promised yesterday to my hon. friends opposite that we should come to a division upon this question this evening. Therefore it will not be out of place if, at this stage, before we reach a conclusion, I should endeavour to review the situation and see exactly where we stand. When, the other day, the hon. member for South Oxford opened the debate on this side, he stated, and stated truly, that great and unusual this year had been the exception with which the Budget speech had been awaited, but that greater still had been the disappointment which followed. It would be a misnomer, however, to call the speech with which the Minister of Finance moved the House into Committee of Ways and Means, the Budget speech. The hon. gentleman, I am sure, will agree with me that it had none of the characteristics, none of the essentials of what we understand by a Budget speech. There was nothing in it of the financial condition of the country; there was nothing of the proposed expenditure for the coming year, and there was certainly no estimate whatever of the probable revenue. It was not a Budget speech, but a special plea. It was a carefully prepared apology for the National Policy, and when the hon. gentleman concluded by stating, that apart from two small modifications, no change would take place in the tariff, but that the people would have one year more to drink at the cup of the National Policy and taste to the dregs of its blessings, great was the disappointment, not only throughout the land, but even on the faces of some of the hon. gentlemen opposite, who had begged and prayed the hon. gentleman that this cup might pass away from them. Indeed, so great, so loud and so persistent had been the demand for reform of the tariff, not only from all parts of the country, but even from the ranks of hon. gentlemen on the other side,

that my hon. friend was forced to notice it, but he noticed it simply to say that he could not accede to it. He promised, however, that he would do so some time, perhaps next year—but he was not sure—but in the meantime he would cogitate, he would ponder, he would consider, he would inquire, and his inquiring, his considering, his pondering, might perhaps take shape in some definite form of action, at some indefinite time. In the meantime, the yoke of taxation is to remain as heavy as it was upon the shoulders of the people; in the meantime, the blessings of the National Policy are to weigh upon the people. What else was to be expected from the hon. gentleman? What else is to be expected from him in the future? Why, Sir, three-fourths of the speech of the hon. gentleman was devoted to the arduous task of convincing the people that they are prosperous. Rachel of old would not be consoled because her children were no more; and the people cannot be convinced because that prosperity, of which they hear so much, is not there. As to my hon. friend, I do not doubt his sincerity whatever. I am quite sure he believes the people are prosperous. I am quite sure that, by dint of repeating and again repeating that the people are prosperous, he has become the victim of his own preaching and has convinced himself of what he has failed to convince others, and if he is really sincere, as no doubt he is, in thinking that the people are prosperous, why should he make any change? It would be madness and folly for him to change a state of things which has brought about this prosperous condition of the people in which his own imagination delights. When hon. gentlemen opposite talk of prosperity, they argue much as James the Second did. According to Macaulay, you remember, James the Second commenced by asserting a proposition, and as often as wiser men showed him that it was erroneous, he asserted it again, con-

ceiving that thereby he had dispelled all objections. It is very much the same with hon. gentlemen. They assume that the country is prosperous, and as often as wiser men endeavour to show them that their position is erroneous, they simply repeat that the country is prosperous. The fact that so many thousands of Canadians every year turn their backs on that prosperity gives them no concern whatever. They ignore the fact, or, if driven to the wall and forced to deal with it, they have the most ingenious theories to explain it away. On a former occasion, the Minister of Finance accounted for the exodus from this country by saying that there was a great movement of population from the east to the west. According to this theory, there must be, somewhere in the west, a centre of gravitation towards which the people of the east are fatally attracted. I will not discuss that theory. The ancients believed that on the Mediterranean Sea ships were fatally attracted to the whirlpool of Charybdis or the rocks of Scylla. But the ancients did not know what we know, that there was such a thing as gravitation. Perhaps, after all, my hon. friend is another Sir Isaac Newton and has discovered some hidden law of nature. Gravitation is a thing which not only applies universally but there are many modifications of it. We know, for instance, that the waters of the ocean are attracted by powerful currents towards certain centres. In certain countries at certain periods of the year the wind blows in certain directions. And so perhaps, after all, there may be in the west a centre of gravitation which attracts the people from the east and unconsciously impels them to abandon their comfortable homes and all the wealth piled around them by the National Policy. Well, Sir, if we really have to battle against some unknown force of nature, in all conscience, in all justice, the National Policy must be held free from blame. If there is in the west some new centre of gravitation which attracts people from the east, it is all in vain that my hon. friend the Minister of Finance and ministerial orators and newspapers vie with each other to paint the enchantments of the National Policy; people will go away from their homes, perhaps to have their fortunes shattered, as in the days of old ships were shattered on the rocks of Scylla. But my hon. friend, since he has given attention to that theory, must have observed that it does not apply uniformly upon this continent. It may be that south of the forty-fifth parallel the attraction is from east to west, but, Sir, this does not apply north of that line. North of the forty-fifth parallel, attraction is not from east to west, but from north to south. If the attraction was from east to west, we should have a displacement of population, but no loss, but actually we have a loss of about 1,000,000 people, who are attracted, not from east to west, but from

north to south. And the hon. gentleman may have observed that his law of gravitation does not apply to all classes of the population; that one class is exempt from it—the recipients of ministerial favours, those who directly or indirectly live upon the public treasury. But those who work hard for a living, the tillers of the soil especially, upon those it is that this attraction acts. Consideration of these facts must convince my hon. friend that his theory is too fantastic for an assembly composed of men of average common sense. The hon. gentleman must admit, that if there is a movement of population, it is not due to some mysterious agency, but to the well-known law, exemplified in all ages, that when people are oppressed by the conditions under which they live, they will seek relief in emigration, whenever they can emigrate. It is an appalling condition of things when a young country like Canada, which could afford food and shelter for 100,000,000 of men, cannot keep its paltry population of 5,000,000. It is an appalling condition of things, but we are told by gentlemen opposite that there is an offset to this, and we are asked to look at the wonderful development of our manufacturing industries under the National Policy. Well, Sir, here we become the prey of the statisticians of Canada. And the statisticians of Canada are a body of most positive men. For them there is nothing doubtful; they undertake to solve every problem that comes in their way. LaBiche, in one of his most amusing comedies, introduces a statistician, who is an enthusiast in his science, but who at least does not pretend to solve every problem with unimpeachable accuracy. He undertakes to calculate the number of widows who on a certain day cross the Pont Neuf. He very nearly reached perfection, yet not quite absolutely. He calculated that on the day in question the number of widows who passed over the bridge was—if I remember the figures—something like 967, and one doubtful. As to this one, he would not be precise in declaring whether she was a widow or not. He confessed his honest doubt. Our statisticians have no such doubts whatever. They have undertaken to calculate to the last cent what is the capital invested in our manufacturing industries, and according to their calculations the amount so invested is \$183,532,827, an increase, as they say, within the last ten years, of \$92,664,127. Now, the object of this, the impression sought to be conveyed by these figures, is that the national wealth of Canada is increased by \$92,000,000, a very large figure, I admit. But the statisticians of Canada have not told us what proportion of water there is in these stocks, nor have they told us what amount of money was really sunk in these investments. For it is a matter of notoriety that a very large proportion of the money which has been invested in manufacturing industries under the National Policy, has been absolutely sunk and lost.



But the impression they seek to convey is, that the national wealth of Canada is greater than it was ten years ago by \$92,000,000, invested in the manufactures in this country. Sir, for my part, I have very great hesitation in accepting these figures. As we have seen, the Government refuse to give us the particulars of these census returns; every one has a right to feel doubtful as to whether we have been told the exact truth. But, Sir, even if we have the exact truth here, even if the national wealth is increased by \$92,000,000, invested in the manufacturing industries of Canada, I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that the amount lost by the farmers in the depreciation of land far exceeds that amount. It cannot be disputed, Sir, that within the last ten years every farm in Canada has lost in value at least 25 per cent of its former value, perhaps 30 per cent, perhaps 40 per cent. This fact cannot be successfully disputed. Now, Sir, there are in Canada to-day 600,000 men engaged in agricultural pursuits. There are on this side of Lake Superior, at least, 500,000 farms. Now, in Ontario, as far as I have been able to read the statistics of that province, the average value of farms is \$2,500. If the average value of these 500,000 farms is placed at \$2,000, and if there is a depreciation of, at least, 25 per cent, we have an actual cost to the farmers of Canada of not less than \$125,000,000, by which amount these men are poorer than they were ten years ago. Now, Sir, no one can dispute that that is an actual loss. My friend from Grey (Mr. Sproule) the other day addressed himself to this view of the question and stated that the loss was not felt, after all, because very few farmers wanted to sell, and it is only the farmer who wishes to sell his farm that feels this loss. But if there is a depression in the price of land, if the loss on the price of farms is at least 25 per cent, as compared with ten years ago, what is the cause? There must be a cause for it. Sir, the cause of the farm decreasing in value is that the profits of the farm have decreased in amount. The capital of the farmer is not invested in bank stocks or railway securities, or other securities, but it is invested in his farm, in his land, and that capital is increased or decreased in value as the profits of the farm increase or decrease. Therefore, when, to-day, we find that the farms all around have decreased in value, we have also the fact that the farmers of Canada have been falling behind in the amount of their wealth. I know what will be the answer to this. I shall be told that this decrease in the value of farms is not to be attributed to the National Policy. I shall be told that it is not due to the National Policy, because the statement has already been made that there is a similar depreciation in the value of farm lands in the United States. My hon. friend the Minister of Finance, a few days ago, laboured hard to prove that farms in the United States had

depreciated in value as much as they have in Canada, that the farmers of the eastern states, instead of going forward, had actually retrograded. Sir, my hon. friend might have spared himself the labour of proving that statement, because I admit it. I admit fully that farmers in the United States are in the same condition as the farmers of Canada, and that their farms have depreciated in value like the farms of Canada; and I say to my hon. friend that, in making that statement, he has made the most powerful arraignment that ever was made of the National Policy. By that statement the National Policy stands condemned by its own friends, because it is an admission that the same cause has produced the same result in both countries. Sir, I ask hon. gentlemen opposite: What is the National Policy? Is it anything else but a servile copy of the American tariff of protection? What was the cry upon which they went to the country in 1878? Was it not reciprocity of trade, or reciprocity of tariff? For fear that hon. gentlemen may have forgotten their own history, I will refresh their memory by a sentence extracted from the speech of Sir John A. Macdonald, delivered in Hamilton, in 1878:

I want the Canadians to say to the Americans: We will have free trade, fair trade, reciprocal trade, if you like; but if you will not have reciprocity in trade, we will not have reciprocity in tariff. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

This sentence of Sir John A. Macdonald was repeated by him in all his speeches, and echoed by all his followers in the press and throughout the country. Upon that cry they won, and, after they had won, as they could not obtain reciprocity, well, they adopted the American tariff. They proceeded after the manner of Chinese duellists. You know in China they have a peculiar code of honour. If a man receives an insult, he sends a challenge to the insulter, which is invariably accepted. But the parties do not meet on the ground. The insulted party disembowels himself with his own sword, and the insulter also plunges his own sword into his bowels; and so the injury is avenged by the death both of the insulted party and of the insulter. So did hon. gentlemen opposite; when they found they could not obtain reciprocity of trade, they adopted reciprocity of tariffs, that is to say, they punished the Americans by adopting their own tariff. At that time the Americans had the war tariff. They were taxing their people mercilessly, and our Government proceeded to adopt their tariff and tax our own people mercilessly likewise. The Americans were plucking the American goose, and our Government proceeded to pluck the Canadian gander. The American tariff was ruining American agriculture, and ever since the Canadian tariff has been ruining Canadian agriculture. Sir, it is well known to-day that agriculture is in a transient condition. The opening of

new wheat fields in diverse parts of the world, the increased facilities for transport have revolutionized the price of cereals. You remember that when the National Policy was adopted in 1878 the price of wheat in Canada, on the average, was \$1 a bushel. The purpose of the National Policy, avowed, maintained, reiterated, was to raise the price of wheat to \$1.50. It is now 60 cents a bushel. It is at this time, when agriculture is less able to bear the burdens than ever, that the agriculturalist is loaded and overloaded by the policy of the Government. At this very moment when from causes over which, I admit, legislation has no control, the Government steps in and, by legislation, places upon the Canadian farmer an intolerable burden of taxation. Everything that he has in his house, in his barn, in his field, is subject to an innumerable list of taxation, and so, at this moment, when, from causes over which legislation has no control, the revenue of the farmer is decreasing, the Government steps in and increases his expenditure. The result is that at this moment agriculture is more than ever deserted as an occupation; and the further result is, that, to-day, apart from the new wheat fields, land is a drug in the market, and cannot find a purchaser. I have heard the question discussed in this House as to which of the two, the Canadian farmer or the American farmer, was in a better condition. Sir, I look upon this discussion as absolutely useless. The American farmer and the Canadian farmer have been treated in the same way, and the result has been the same; save, perhaps, that the American farmer, having a much wider market, does not suffer so much. If you desire to know what is the fate of the American farmer, I cannot do better than quote to the House an article from the Chicago "Herald," published last summer during the presidential campaign. I select it from a series of most admirable articles which have since been published in pamphlet form. The editor says:

Thirty years of protective tariff taxation have reduced American agriculture to a position so ignoble that in some places it does not even retain its self-respect. A generation ago the American farmer was the proudest and most independent workingman on the earth. To-day he cannot persuade his own son to remain on the farm.

Very like Canada. The editor goes on to say:

It was the prosperity and independence of the American farmer that first excited the cupidity of protectionists. They wanted to rob him and they invented an excuse. They told him that he needed a home market, and that they would give it to him in return for the privilege of taxing him. When the home market swindle was exposed they beguiled him with the idea that they could and would share their protective tariff plunder with him, and, while going through the mockery of putting a tariff tax on foreign agricultural products, they took occasion to increase their own share of the plunder. The one was a pretense. The other was real and tangible. The home market

confidence game has been laid bare in Pennsylvania and New England, the seats of the great tariff monopolies, where fine farms, once the homes of several generations of Americans, are now abandoned and cannot be sold for even the value of the buildings.

More and more like Canada. The editor goes on to say:

The protective tariff is a tax upon consumption. It rests upon nearly everything that the farmer uses or wears. It is on the lumber of his house, on the glass in his windows, on the implements with which he makes his crops, on his dishes, tinware, furniture and carpets, his cutlery and lamps, his clothing, his blankets and his harness. It enhances the price of nearly everything that he buys. It does not add a farthing to the value of anything that he has to sell.

Apart from the tax on lumber, it is absolutely like Canada. Sir, is it to be wondered at that in the year just elapsed, during the last presidential elections, the American farmers made a supreme effort to free themselves from the grasp of the octopus which, for so many years, has had them fast in its arms and has been feeding on the best of their blood. The American farmers joined all other classes, outside of the protected manufacturers, in a crusade against the voracious monster. Now, we were told a few days ago by an hon. gentleman sitting on the other side of the House, that land has also depreciated in value in England. So it has; but, Sir, the condition of land in England is not to be compared with the condition of land in America. Land in England has always been held as a monopoly by a privileged class. For centuries and centuries a privileged class had legislation in its own hands. It is only a few years since the advance of democratic ideas has displaced the source of power in England, and now it rests in the hands of the whole nation. And so long as that privileged class had it in its power to legislate, they did the best they could to enhance the value of their monopoly. What was the object of the corn laws? Their object was simply to increase the price of land to the land-owners, and the chief reason which was advanced against the abolition of those laws was this, that it would decrease the price of land and lower the standard of the aristocracy. Undoubtedly of all men who defended the corn laws, the ablest was Lord Stanley, and, in the very last debate which took place in the House of Lords, when speaking of the rack-renting landlords of England and Ireland, he used this very significant language:

My Lords, these are the true aristocracy of the country. If you reduce these men in the scale of society, you will inflict an irretrievable and irreparable injury upon the country.

Lord Stanley was right, undoubtedly, if an aristocracy is indispensable to a nation. But such views we do not hold on this continent. On this continent we hold that all men are free and equal before the law, and that there should be no privileged class; but the idea which underlies the language of Lord Stanley



was, according to his view, true. Freedom of trade would endanger the fate of the aristocracy. At the time of the discussion of the corn laws the rental of land was \$12 per acre; but the price of rental has been reduced until, after forty years of free trade, it is \$6 or thereabouts; and this condition of things will go on. The price of land will continue to decline until it has reached its normal standard, just as in this country and in the United States, if we had freedom of trade, the price of land would increase to its normal standard, because in land as in everything else there is a normal standard which can be moved up or down by artificial causes for the benefit of a privileged class; but so soon as these obstacles are removed the price will reach its normal standard, its own level, and its level is and always must be based on the relative profit that can be obtained by those who till the soil, and that is the only standard. I may remind the House of this, that when the National Policy was introduced in Parliament a mighty attempt was made to capture the farmers. It was represented to the farmers that they would be greatly benefited if such a policy were adopted. Of course the National Policy must increase the taxation of the farmers; but it was represented to them that they must submit to the increased taxation, because the higher duties would be the means of establishing in this country manufacturing industries which would afford a home market and increase prices for their products. Let me quote here a speech delivered by Sir John A. Macdonald, which was the text-book at that time of his party. Addressing a meeting of farmers at Bury, he said:

I tell the manufacturer unless he gives protection to the farmer, the farmer will not give protection to him. I say the same thing to the farmer. You must not grumble, if perhaps you have to pay a few cents more for anything we can produce in this country. You must not be hungering for strange markets to get goods at bankrupt, sacrifice prices. No; you must encourage manufactures at our own doors. Who are those artisans and skilled labourers to whom you must pay perhaps a few cents more for the produce of their lands? They are your brothers and sons, bone of your bone, flesh of your flesh, and in return for your giving only, perhaps, the real value to these men of their products, you have at home—at the next village—your reward, because you have purchasers for everything you can raise, not only for the larger crops, but for the egg that the hen drops, and the hen herself, God bless her.

How false this language sounds in view of actual facts? Where is the home market to-day? Where is the nearest village to which the farmer can take his eggs? Whether he takes his eggs to the nearest village or the nearest city he will be glad to get 10 cents a dozen for them, and he will not always be sure of getting that. The home market is a delusion which has long vanished into thin air; but what is not a delusion is the hard fact that remains to the farmer to-day, that though he has not a home market, though he cannot take his eggs to the next village, yet he has to pay a heavy tax on everything

he buys; a tax upon his clothing, a tax on his cottons, a tax on his woollens, a tax on the iron he uses, a tax upon the sugar he eats, for though the farmer and the consumer no longer pays a tax into the treasury on sugar he still continues to pay a tax for the benefit of the sugar refineries of Canada. But I will undoubtedly be told: Granted that the National Policy has not benefited the farmers, surely you will not deny that it has developed several industries. I am free to admit that the National Policy has developed a few industries into monopolies, into suckers which extort inordinate profits from the people of Canada; but I question very much whether the National Policy has benefited the great body of manufacturers, the smaller manufacturers and those who have invested a small amount of capital in their own business, because it is obvious that the moment an article is taxed for the benefit of one special manufacture that manufacturer is of course protected and benefited; but while one manufacturer may be so protected and benefited, two, five or ten manufacturers may be hampered by the tariff, because the articles produced by that one manufacturer may be the raw material of the two, five or ten others who have to use it and are hampered thereby. Take the iron duties. Everybody remembers the great flourish of trumpets with which Sir Charles Tupper introduced his policy with respect to pig iron, in 1887. My hon. friend from Queen's (Mr. Davies) a few days ago alluded to this subject, and I need not go over the same ground; but let me simply remark this: that at the time Sir Charles Tupper introduced his policy respecting pig iron, it was already protected by a duty of \$2 per ton and a bounty of \$1.50, and by his policy the bounty was increased after three years to \$2, and the duty was increased from that moment to \$4 per ton. So at that time we gave the producer in pig iron a bounty of \$2 per ton and a duty of \$4, and Sir Charles Tupper used—I believe my hon. friend quoted his language, but I will quote it again because these facts are instructive—these words:

Now, Sir, the result is that by the adoption of this policy you will give permanent employment to an army of men numbering at least 20,000, increasing our population from 80,000 to 100,000 souls, and affording the means of supporting them in comfort and prosperity. I say, Sir, that if there is anything in the National Policy, if we have not been all wrong from the very start, if the history of Canada shows that this National Policy has achieved for Canada what we said it would achieve,—and I have given the most abundant and irrefragable evidence on that point,—if there is any question on which there ought not to be any doubt in the mind of any hon. gentleman, it is that the application of the same sound policy which we have found so admirable and successful in relation to all other industries, will have the same result in regard to the great iron industry of this country.

Well, Sir, this language is simply ludicrous in the face of what followed afterwards—ludicrous is the word. I show to what extent a man of ability can go when he undertakes

to talk protection, as Sir Charles Tupper undertook to talk it at that moment. Although the people of Canada have been saddled with enormous duties the result has been that the production of pig iron instead of increasing has decreased all along, and the result has been that, though we have not reaped any benefit such as Sir Charles Tupper promised, yet at the same time all the manufacturers who use iron, and they are legion in this country, have been hampered, and seriously hampered, by these duties, and if the Minister of Finance were to bring down to the House the petitions and memorials which I understand the Government have received against the duties on pig iron, they would open the eyes of hon. members of this House, for I have it on good authority that for a long time petitions have been sent in begging the Minister of Finance to remove the duties that have done no good to anybody, but have seriously hampered the iron trade. Well, Sir, what is at present the condition of the country? This question can be looked upon from two different stand-points—from the stand-point of the Government, and from the stand-point of the people. The Government tell us that the country is prospering, but what do the people say? What is their opinion and what is their action? The people, Sir, one portion of them fly from that prosperity, and those who remain in the country are begging and petitioning the Government to free them from the National Policy. What is the conclusion to be derived from this state of things? The conclusion is: that taxation by whatever name you call it, taxation however you may disguise it, taxation is an evil which never can produce prosperity. It is an evil, and no good can come from evil. Taxation by whatever name you call it, whether disguised or undisguised, is always an abridgment of the rights of the citizen. It is a toll levied upon his earnings and upon his property. I know very well that taxation by Customs can be so arranged as to divert the proceeds from the public treasury and put it into the pockets of a few favoured individuals, and can therefore have a semblance of prosperity; but, Sir, that prosperity for the few, is always at the expense of the many. Freedom is the normal condition of trade, and freedom is the goal to which we are aspiring. That is the policy of this side of the House. I know very well, Sir, that we cannot for many years have freedom of trade, such as they have in England. I know that for many years we must raise our revenue by Customs duties, but I tell the Finance Minister, that the difference between him and us, is this: That whereas he forms his tariff for protection, and with revenue as merely an incident; we will frame our tariff, not for protection, but for revenue, and we will impede and interfere with freedom of trade only in so far as is absolutely necessary for the purposes of a revenue, and for nothing else. Sir, I stated on another occasion, and

in another place, that during the last election in the United States, the people of that country had most emphatically decided for the principle of free trade. My hon. friend the Finance Minister, in opening this debate, challenged this statement, and not only challenged the statement, but actually denied it. He is strong at denying, I admit, but if he denies that the American people, at the last presidential election, practically decided in favour of freedom of trade, I am prepared to hear that the hon. gentleman will deny everything, that he will deny that there are twelve months in the year, that he will deny that the sun rises in the east and moves towards the west, or that he will deny that there is such a thing as an exodus. But, as the hon. gentleman is of a skeptic nature, I will endeavour to give him proof which ought to be sufficient in itself. I will quote to him from the platform adopted by the Democratic party at its last convention in Chicago. Here is how it reads:

We denounce Republican protection as a fraud, a robbery of the great majority of the American people for the benefit of the few. We declare it to be a fundamental principle of the Democratic party that the Federal Government has no constitutional power to impose and collect tariff duties except for the purpose of revenue only, and demand that the collection of such duties shall be limited to the necessities of the Government and honestly and economically administered.

Sir, denouncing protection has always seemed to me as promoting free trade. Does the hon. gentleman believe the reverse, or does he think differently? Well, if he does, let us go a step further. The hon. gentleman is aware that during the last election the question which was fought upon every hustings in the United States, the question which was discussed in every newspaper, was the merit of protection, on the one side, and the merit of free trade on the other. Is this not sufficient to convince my hon. friend?

Mr. FOSTER. No.

Mr. LAURIER. Then, this is not sufficient, let us go a little further. The hon. gentleman is perhaps aware—I am sure he heard it, but if he heard it perhaps he will choose to forget—the hon. gentleman is perhaps aware that during last session of Congress the Democratic party in the House of Representatives organized a scheme whereby they circulated as their own literature, the whole of Henry George's book, "Protection or Free Trade," and there never was a stronger plea written in favour of free trade than that book contains. When the Democratic party in the House of Representatives went so far as to organize a scheme to circulate a whole book written in favour of free trade, will the hon. gentleman, in view of all that evidence, still believe that the issue which was fought at the polls during the last election was not an issue between freedom of trade and protection? If the hon. gentleman still denies that, I am prepared to believe, as I said a moment ago, that he will deny anything whatever.



But, Sir, I know very well that, though the principle of free trade has triumphed in the United States—and perhaps this is the little stratagem which the hon. gentleman wants to employ upon this occasion, perhaps this is the refuge he wants to take for himself—I know very well, as well as the hon. gentleman knows, that, although the principle of free trade has been adopted in the United States, that freedom of trade will not be applied in the tariff this year, or next year, or the year after. I know that for a great many years to come, the American people will continue to levy their revenue by a Customs tariff, but I say this to the hon. gentleman: That henceforward, not only as long as the Democratic party are in power, (out I believe, also, that whenever the Republican party comes back to power), that no more shall revenue be levied for the purpose of protection, but that it shall be levied only for the purposes of a revenue, and for nothing else; because, as I have said to the hon. gentleman, the tariff of protection has been denounced by the American people as a fraud and a robbery. Sir, I have stated, and I repeat it here, that our tariff is simply an imitation of the American tariff, and, as the American tariff was denounced, so now I denounce the Canadian tariff as a fraud, I denounce it as a robbery of the great majority of the Canadian people for the benefit of the few. I denounce it in the name of the thousands whom it has impoverished. I denounce it in the name of the thousands whom it has sent into exile, and I denounce it in the name of a long-suffering nation. Talk, Sir, of reforming the tariff! Gentlemen on the other side of the House expect that my hon. friend the Finance Minister will reform the tariff. Why, Sir, the Finance Minister cannot do it, because he will never dare to extirpate from it the vicious principle which is the bane and evil of it. I know what he will do. He will tinker his tariff; he will patch it; he will polish the surface of it so as to give it the appearance of reform, but as to any measure of reform in the tariff, it will, and must be as hollow as the fruit of the Dead Sea. Mr. Speaker, I come now to an objection which I have not heard in this House, but which is commencing to be circulated in the Government press. I have seen it stated in the ministerial press, not only in one paper, but in several, that the Liberals cannot be sincere in their policy of tariff reform. It is stated that they cannot be sincere when they profess to be in favour of alleviating the burdens which press upon the majority of the people, because, forsooth, only a few months ago, they wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff, under the guise of unrestricted reciprocity. I denounce this statement as an absolute falsehood, and I defy any man, either in this House or out of it, to quote an expression from any Liberal that he ever attempted or wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff

Nay, more, Sir, I defy any gentleman, in this House or out of it, to prove that the American authorities ever wanted to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff, as the price of unrestricted reciprocity.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Who says "no." Is there any man in this House who will challenge my statement? Ministers have asserted it, I know, but let them bring the evidence. Let them bring the correspondence which they have in their own possession. If Ministers here made that statement, Ministers on the other side have said the very reverse; and since the correspondence has not been brought down, I for my part refuse to believe the statement. Talk, Sir, of assimilating the Canadian tariff to the American tariff. It would be very shocking, of course, to hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, who have not hesitated to bring the whole body of the American tariff into our Statute-book—it would be very shocking to them if the Liberal party were now to assimilate the Canadian tariff to the American tariff in the few points in which there is still a discrepancy. They themselves can do it, and do it under the cloak of loyalty. Loyalty, Sir, is a cloak under which we know many things can be hidden, which, if viewed under the full light of day, would be odious and repellant; and this is, perhaps, the reason hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House are always so fond of parading in that garment. But I say, Sir, without the least hesitation, that uniformity of tariffs is not at all essential to reciprocity. Of course, I fully admit that if there were between the American tariff and the Canadian tariff a great divergence in regard to some articles, reciprocity in those articles would be almost impossible. There are two reasons for that. The first is that if there were a great difference between the two tariffs in regard to some article, a similar article would be imported from abroad into the country having the lower tariff, with the view of smuggling it into the country with the higher tariff. There is another reason which I will state, and which will commend itself to hon. gentlemen opposite. If there were a great discrepancy between the tariffs in one article, the manufacturer in the country with the lower tariff would have a great advantage over the manufacturer in the country with the higher tariff. But let me say that we have always been in favour of reciprocity. No one would suppose, because we were in favour of unrestricted reciprocity, that if we could not obtain that we should not take anything else. Again and again we have said that if we could not obtain reciprocity along the whole line, unrestricted, unlimited, we should be willing to take reciprocity in natural products, or in natural products with manufactured articles included. But when



we adopted the policy of unrestricted reciprocity in 1888, the tendency of the American tariff was a downward tendency. There were many indications of that. The first was the Message of President Cleveland, addressed to Congress in the fall of 1887, in which he had directly attacked the system of protection.

Mr. SPROULE. The McKinley Bill showed it more.

Mr. LAURIER. I will come to that. It is true, shortly afterwards a wave of protection passed over the United States, which resulted in the McKinley Bill; but the McKinley Bill was the last spasmodic effort of a system which was about to fall to pieces and which exists no more. The hon. gentleman knows that the McKinley Bill has been condemned in emphatic terms by the American people in the last election, and he knows that it will be repealed at the next session of Congress. He knows that the party now in power are not only in favour of free trade as a general principle, but in particular are in favour of reciprocity with Canada. Now, Sir, of all the speeches I have listened to during this debate, there was one to which I listened with peculiar pleasure. That was the speech of the hon. member for East Durham (Mr. Craig). It was almost a Liberal speech. It is true, it was still tainted with some Conservative heresy, but on the whole it was a very good speech; and when I listened to the hon. gentleman speaking as he did, it seemed to me that he was very much in the position of King Agrippa after the preaching of St. Paul, when he exclaimed: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." I presume that the hon. gentleman is almost a Christian—I mean Liberal; he is trying to lift his party up to a higher sphere; he is in favour of tariff reform; he is even in favour of reciprocity; and he said—I marked the sentence—that he hoped that the Government were also in favour of reciprocity. He hoped it; he was not sure; neither am I. I think they are not; but if they are, then they have an opportunity of getting reciprocity. They can have it. I stated a moment ago that the Democratic party were in favour of reciprocity with Canada. I have the proof in my hand, and I will give it to the hon. gentleman. The hon. gentleman is aware that one of the most important members of the Democratic party to-day in the United States is Mr. Campbell, the ex-governor of Ohio. In the month of December last Mr. Campbell delivered a speech on Staten Island, in which he referred to this very question of reciprocity with Canada. First of all, he referred to the policy of reciprocity put forward by the Republican party in the clause of the McKinley Bill, containing a standing offer of reciprocity to the tropical and semi-tropical countries of South America. Then Mr. Campbell spoke as follows:—

Reciprocity—the kind of reciprocity that that distinguished gentleman, Erastus Wiinan, advocates, is something. That kind of reciprocity actually means something, because that means that you shall take the produce of Staten Island whether they be of the farm or of the workshop, and take them to some great country with which you have a large trade, like the provinces north of us, the Dominion of Canada, and exchange them freely for all the products of that country with equal freedom. If you had reciprocity, actual reciprocity with the nations of the world, what would you have?

A voice—"Free Trade."

A gentleman says "Free Trade." Why, it is no use for me to come all the way from Ohio to tell you anything about the situation as to reciprocity. There you have it in two words. If you had reciprocity it would simply mean that you could go down to the harbour of New York with anything you have, lay it on any vessel there and send it to any part of the earth and trade it for anything you wanted and bring those goods back and sell them whenever you pleased.

I sometimes give a definition of reciprocity which is a bit humorous, but which fits the case exactly. It is this: Maude and Claude are a couple of young people. There has been a great deal in the newspapers about reciprocity, and Maude is like most women. She has not bothered much about politics. She had to get several new dresses this autumn and has been pretty busy generally, and she says: "Claude, I have been reading about reciprocity. Now, what is reciprocity?"

"Why," he says. "Don't you know? Now, if I kiss you and you kiss me back, that's reciprocity." To which she retorted that she always supposed it was something nice.

I am in favour of that kind of reciprocity between us and the country we trade with. If we are going to kiss them, we want to be kissed back a little in return, and when we pick out the girls we are going to kiss, instead of picking out the black ones of south America, I would pick out the white ones of Canada and Europe.

It's a matter of taste, and I believe that the Democrats would just as soon that it would be white.

Now, if my hon. friend will only persuade the hon. Minister of Finance to go back to Washington and offer his check for a chaste osculation, the thing will be done at once. But, Sir, it may be said to me: What is the use of having reciprocity, even in natural products, if the condition of the farmers in the United States is worse than the condition of our own farmers? I am sure that I need not give an answer to this question to my hon. friend from East Durham, because he is in favour of reciprocity; neither need I give it to my hon. friend from Richmond (Mr. Gillies), because he is in favour of reciprocity. But there may be some other gentlemen on the other side of the House who are of the opinion of a former President of the Council, Mr. Colby, who was against reciprocity even in natural products. The advantage we should have in reciprocity, even in natural products, would be this, that protection is one and the same thing on both sides of the line; and if we had free trade only in natural products, the condition of the farmers on one side and the condition of the farmers on the other would be benefited to that extent. But I know that besides the hon. member for East Durham and the hon.

member for Richmond, there are many hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House who are in favour of reciprocity; and if so, I am at a loss to understand the reason why they have always greeted the efforts of the Liberal party for reciprocity with such torrents of abuse. They have stated, again and again, that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. My hon. friend from Iberville (Mr. Béchard), alluded to that this evening, and I can allude to it again. For my part, I never understood how unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. Will any one tell me how it will? Will any one tell me how it is, that if the Canadian people were to have reciprocity with the United States, restricted or unrestricted, annexation would follow? If we had a commercial treaty with the States, whether restricted or unrestricted, the institutions of our country would continue just the same as they are to-day; the country would continue to be governed under the same British parliamentary system as it is to-day. Every man entitled to it would have a vote as he has to-day. Therefore, how can it be said that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation? Is it to be supposed that if the Canadian people were to come in contact with the American people, our loyalty would fade away? Do hon. gentlemen opposite suppose that, even if we had closer trade relations with the Americans, the loyalty of the Canadian people would vanish into thin air? If hon. gentlemen opposite hold any such opinion, I hold that the much vaunted loyalty of the Conservative party is hollow and unreal, and is brought forward only to do service for party purposes and for nothing else. I have heard it stated many a time by hon. gentlemen on the other side, and in the press, that they find an argument for their contention in the letter of the Hon. Mr. Blake. Mr. Blake gave it as his opinion, and we hear it quoted from time to time on the floor of this House, that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to annexation. I discuss this question fairly, and I will quote the words of Mr. Blake:

The tendency in Canada of unrestricted free trade with the States, higher duties being maintained against the United Kingdom, would be towards political union.

But I ask hon. gentlemen on the other side, whether Mr. Blake did not, upon that occasion, confine himself simply to reciprocity? Did he not also give his opinion as to the National Policy?

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh, oh.

Mr. LAURIER. Does any one deny it? I am surprised at the power of denial of some hon. gentlemen on the other side. I am surprised that there are gentlemen on the other side who will deny that Mr. Blake said also that the tendency of the National Policy was direct to annexation. Allow me to quote his words again:

The Canadian Conservative party has failed to accomplish the prediction of its promoters. Its real tendency has been, as foretold twelve years ago, towards disintegration and annexation, instead of consolidation and the maintenance of that British connection of which they claim to be the special guardians.

This is the language of Mr. Blake. Two years afterwards, we hear hon. gentlemen on the other side deny that Mr. Blake gave it as his opinion that the National Policy directly led to annexation. If you are, on the other side, against unrestricted reciprocity, because Mr. Blake said that it would lead to annexation, how is it that you still retain the National Policy, which, in the opinion of Mr. Blake, is bound to produce the very same result? Destroy the National Policy at once, put it away at once, because every moment, every day you keep it on the Statute-book, is another step taken towards annexation. There is, however, a more serious objection than this to unrestricted reciprocity. This objection of annexation I do not treat seriously. I do not affect to treat it seriously, I dismiss it altogether; but I say, without any hesitation, that there is more serious objection to unrestricted reciprocity, and that is the discrimination against England. This is an objection, which, for my part, I have always treated with respect. I respect the feeling of gentlemen on the other side, who from motive, which I will not discuss, would hesitate to discriminate against England; but I tell hon. gentlemen opposite that when they take up that question of discrimination against England, they are raising against reciprocity an objection which England long ago abandoned. My hon. friend beside me from Prince Edward Island (Mr. Davies) proved the other day most conclusively, that in the Brown treaty England had abandoned that objection in the most formal manner. It is true that his statement was denied by gentlemen on the other side. It is true that they pretended to prove, by the language of Mr. Brown, that England had never abandoned its objection to discrimination. Well, that is a question we can discuss again. I grant that when Mr. Brown went to Washington, as plenipotentiary of the Canadian Government, to discuss reciprocity, he had it in his mind not to discriminate against England, and he kept that in his mind, not only at the outset, but throughout the whole negotiation. I will quote from his speech, delivered in the Senate in 1875:

I come now, hon. gentlemen, to the objections which have been urged against the treaty from such quarters as entitle them to formal answer. The first of these is the allegation that the treaty discriminated against Great Britain in favour of the United States. Nothing could be more unfounded than this. It was perfectly understood from the opening of the negotiations, that no article could be free from duty in regard to the United States that was not also open with regard to Great Britain, and nothing else was ever contemplated for a moment.

I am not surprised at this, and no one will be surprised at it, when I refer to the first



proposal made by Mr. Brown and Sir Edward Thornton, his co-plenipotentiary, to the American commissioners. It was this :

In regard to the addition of certain classes of manufactures—said the British commissioner—to the free list under the old treaty, we reminded Mr. Fish, that the revenue of the Canadian Dominion was largely obtained from a 15 per cent ad valorem duty on manufactured goods, and that any articles made free in Canada under agreement with any foreign country must be made free to Great Britain.

Now, at the same time the English plenipotentiary gave a list to the American commissioners of the articles which they proposed should be included in the treaty. They were as follows :—

- Agricultural implements, to be defined.
- Extracts of bark for tanning purposes.
- Bath bricks ; bricks for building purposes.
- Earth ochres, ground or unground.
- Hay ; lime ; malt.
- Manufactures of iron and steel, to be defined.
- Manufactures of iron or steel and wood, jointly, to be defined.
- Manufactures of wood, to be defined.
- Mineral and other oil.
- Plaster, raw or calcined.
- Salt and straw.
- Stone, marble or granite, partly or wholly cut or wrought.

Now it is to be remarked that, with the exception of iron and steel, all these other articles were such as we did not import from England, so that there could be no competition from England, and, therefore, no discrimination. The only articles as to which there might be discrimination were the articles of iron and steel, and as to these, they were to be defined. Undoubtedly the British commissioners had it in their mind to define those articles, so that there should be no discrimination against England. But these propositions were not admitted by the American commissioners. So another was made and the following list was finally decided upon. Now, I am calling attention to the list which was finally included in the treaty :

- Agricultural implements, all kinds.
- Axes of all kinds.
- Boots and shoes of leather.
- Boot and shoe making machines.
- Buffalo robes, dressed and trimmed.
- Cotton grain bags ; cotton denims.
- Cotton jeans, complete.
- Cotton drillings, unbleached.
- Cotton plaids ; cotton tickings.
- Cottonades, unbleached.
- Cabinetware and furniture or parts thereof.
- Carriages, carts, wagons and other wheeled vehicles and sleighs or parts thereof.
- Fire engines or parts thereof.
- Felt covering for boilers.
- Gutta percha belting and tubing.
- Iron, bar, hoop, pig, puddled, rod, sheet or scrap.
- Iron nails, spikes, bolts, tacks, brads or springs.
- Iron castings.
- India rubber belting and tubing.
- Locomotives for railways or parts thereof.
- Lead, sheet or pig.
- Leather, sole or upper.
- Leather, harness and saddlery.

Mill or factory or steam-boat fixed engines and machines or parts thereof.

Manufactures of marble, stone, slate or granite.

Manufactures of wood solely, or of wood nailed, bound, hinged or locked with metal materials.

Mangles, washing machines, wringing machines and drying machines or parts thereof.

Printing papers for newspapers.

Paper-making machines or parts thereof.

Printing type, presses and folders, paper cutters, ruling machines.

Page-numbering machines and stereotyping and electrotyping apparatus or parts thereof.

Refrigerators or parts thereof.

Railroad cars, carriages and trucks or parts thereof.

Satinets of wool and cotton.

Steam engines or parts thereof.

Steel, wrought or cast, and steel plates and rails.

Tin tubes and piping.

Tweeds, of wool solely.

Water wheel machines and apparatus or parts thereof.

Now, it is to be remarked that, whereas the first list submitted to the British commissioners, Mr. Brown and Sir Edward Thornton, contained no article (with the exception of iron and steel, which was to be defined) which we imported from England, the latter list contains a large number of articles which we imported from England, such as cotton, iron, steel, woollen tweeds, &c. Now, Sir, after having read the statement of Mr. Brown, it seems that he had in his mind all the time that the Canadian Parliament would not discriminate against Great Britain in these articles, and that the same course would, undoubtedly, be followed in regard to the treaty of 1874, if it was passed and ratified as in the treaty of 1854, that is to say, all the articles in the treaty which we imported from England would be placed upon the free list when coming from Britain. But before the treaty was signed—when it was completed, but not signed—it was referred by the Canadian Government to Lord Derby, who referred it to the Board of Trade for its opinion upon the question of discrimination, and it is to this I refer the attention of the House. Let me first give the statement of Lord Derby :

Renewal of treaty of 1854 for twenty-one years, including the fisheries, with the addition of the free admission of salt, manufactures of wood, iron or steel articles, or of these jointly, agricultural implements and a few other trifling articles.

And here is the answer of the Board of Trade :

To this no objection can be taken, whatever criticism may have been made on the original reciprocity treaty, on the ground that Canada was setting up differential duties in favour of the United States, both against this country and countries with which we have most favoured nation treaties. No such objection can be taken now.

Now, Sir, that is the answer of the Board of Trade in 1874 : That if Canada entered into a treaty with the United States which included articles imported from England, there would be a discrimination against England,



whereas in 1854 objections would have been taken, in 1874 the same objection would not have been taken. Why, Sir, England realized that Canada had progressed; that Canada has interests distinct from England, and that Canada, having been given the power to govern itself, should be allowed to exercise that power in its entirety. And mark, Sir, the road that had been travelled from 1854 to 1874. In 1854 all the articles included in the treaty, and they were many, were placed upon the free list of Canada. The following are the articles included in the treaty of 1854 :—

Grain, flour and breadstuffs of all kinds.  
 Animals of all kinds.  
 Fresh, smoked and salted meats.  
 Cotton wool, seeds and vegetables.  
 Undried fruits, dried fruits.  
 Fish of all kinds.  
 Products of fish and of all other creatures living in the water.  
 Poultry, eggs.  
 Hides, furs, skins or tails undressed.  
 Stone or marble in its crude or unwrought state.  
 Slate.  
 Butter, cheese, tallow.  
 Lard, horns, manures.  
 Ores of metals of all kinds.  
 Coal.  
 Pitch, tar, turpentine, ashes.  
 Timber and lumber of all kinds, round hewed, sawed, unmanufactured in whole or in part.  
 Firewood.  
 Plants, shrubs, and trees.  
 Pelts, wool.  
 Fish oil.  
 Rice, broomcorn and bark.  
 Gypsum, ground or unground.  
 Hewn or wrought or unwrought burr or grindstones.  
 Dye stuffs.  
 Flax, hemp, and tow unmanufactured.  
 Unmanufactured tobacco.  
 Rags.

As soon as the treaty had been signed and completed and ratified by the Senate of the United States, and ratified by the Legislature of Canada, all these articles except one were placed upon the free list. That one article was dried fruits. Now, of all these articles which were placed upon the free list, and thus made free to Britain, we did not import from Britain any except one, that is coal. As to coal, there could be no discrimination against England to a large extent, for the reason that coal cannot come by vessel further than Montreal, and cannot come much in competition with American coal west of Montreal. And what was the reason dried fruits was not placed on the free list? Simply to discriminate in favour of the Americans. The Americans at that time produced dried fruits, and therefore we discriminated in their favour. It is true, we did not import dried fruits directly from England; but we did import them from Greece, with which country we had, at that time, a treaty on the most favoured nation basis, so that in 1854 England consented to our discriminating against nations with which she had treaties of commerce. In 1874 she consented to discriminate against her own goods. What is the objection raised

by hon. gentlemen against reciprocity, limited or unlimited, when England herself has agreed and consented that Canada should discriminate against her if Canada found it to her advantage? Now, Sir, upon this question I cannot do better, I think, than quote to the House an article which I extract from a newspaper, an independent newspaper, the "Week," of Toronto. The "Week" speaks thus in its issue of the 27th January last:

But is free access to the markets of the United States attainable on any conditions which Canada could accept without sacrifice of duty or self-respect? Singularly enough, this is a question in regard to which we have directly contradictory testimony from the only two parties who are in a position to know. According to the version of the late conference given by Messrs. Blaine and Foster, the ex-Secretary, and the present Secretary, respectively, of the United States Government, the conditions offered were such as most persons would pronounce fair and reasonable, viz., that the list of goods to come under the treaty of reciprocity must include manufactures as well as natural products, and that the tariffs must be mutually preferential. This would have involved discrimination to a certain extent against the mother country in common with all other nations, but such discrimination is of the very nature of reciprocity treaties and could not be objected to by Great Britain, who would be only too glad to see a revival of Canadian prosperity and progress upon such terms. On the other hand, according to the recollections of Sir John Thompson and our Mr. Foster, reciprocity was offered only on condition of Canada's adoption of the United States tariff, which is of course a very different matter. This matter should be fairly faced and discussed during the session, not so much to settle the question of correctness of memory, which would be a delicate and unprofitable business, as to pronounce upon the desirability of now taking the American representatives at their word, and seeking a renewal of negotiations on the lines which they have distinctly laid down. It is scarcely conceivable that the incoming Washington Administration will be less favourable to such an arrangement than the outgoing one. What attitude will our Government take, is one of the test questions.

Why, Sir, who does not know that if we had a reciprocity treaty with the United States the prosperity of Canada would be increased to a very large extent? Hon. gentlemen on the other side cannot dispute it, for they admit themselves to be in favour of reciprocity. Therefore, Sir, if our prosperity were increased, our purchasing power would be increased, and if England might suffer in one direction she would benefit still more in another direction, and, therefore, instead of injuring England, as is contended by hon. gentlemen opposite, we would actually confer a benefit on England, on Canada and on the United States as well. This is the reason why we are in favour of that policy. Sir, there is another question to which I want to allude, that is, an issue of fact which was raised the other day by my hon. friend from Norfolk (Mr. Charlton), who said that when the Government dissolved the House in 1891 they asserted to the people of Canada that they could and would obtain a reciprocity treaty for them with the United States. The hon. gentlemen opposite denied that; but, Sir,

I wish now to affirm that every word spoken by my hon. friend from North Norfolk is true, and I affirm as a fact, to which I challenge the contradiction of the hon. gentleman, that when Parliament was dissolved in 1891 by His Excellency upon the advice of the Canadian Government, they did it under a false pretense in the eyes of the Canadian people and with deceit in their mouth, by stating to the people of Canada that they were induced to dissolve Parliament because they had received from Mr. Blaine and the American authorities an invitation to negotiate a reciprocity treaty. Sir, the fact was that it was not Mr. Blaine or the American authorities who had sought for a conference with a view to reciprocity, but it was the Canadian Government who had sought for a conference at Washington with a view of obtaining a reciprocity treaty. Let me call the attention of the House to a state paper which was passed in the preceding month of December, and which was communicated to the press at the same time that the dissolution was announced. It was a Minute of Council, which read as follows:—

The Committee of the Privy Council having learned that the Honourable the Secretary of State for the United States had expressed to Her Majesty's Ministers at Washington his readiness to negotiate for a reciprocity treaty on a wide basis and particularly for the protection of the mackerel fisheries, and for the fisheries on inland waters, and had subsequently stated to Her Majesty's Minister his great desire to conclude a reciprocity treaty, they desire to take the opportunity afforded by these intimations from Mr. Blaine of suggesting the expediency of taking early steps to adjust the various matters that have arisen and now exist, affecting the relations of Canada with the United States.

Now, Sir, you have it in plain language; here is a state paper, a Minute of Council for which hon. gentlemen are responsible to this House, stating that it was Mr. Blaine who had invited a conference, that Mr. Blaine had manifested a great desire to have a reciprocity treaty. What was their object? It was simply as my hon. friend from North Norfolk (Mr. Charlton) stated a few days ago, in order to convey the impression to the Canadian people that they would obtain a reciprocity treaty. They desired to make the Canadian people believe that the Canadian Government could obtain a reciprocity treaty, and that Mr. Blaine had manifested a great desire to have such a treaty. Yet, Sir, far from this being the case, when these gentlemen attempted some months ago to have a reciprocity conference at Washington, before they could enter into negotiations, Mr. Blaine wanted an explanation as to the extraordinary position in which he had been placed in the eyes of the Canadian people. Before he consented to receive the Canadian delegation, he addressed a letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, in which he said:—

In view of the fact that you had come to the State Department with the proposals, and that the subject was then for the first time mentioned between us, and in view of the further fact that I agreed to a private

conference as explained in my Minute, I confess that it was a surprise to me when several weeks later during the Canadian canvass, Sir John Macdonald and Sir Charles Tupper both stated before public assemblages that an informal discussion of a reciprocity treaty would take place at Washington after the 4th March, by the initiation of the Secretary of State.

Here we see Mr. Blaine protesting against the position in which he had been placed by the false representations which had been made to the Canadian public that he had sought for a reciprocity treaty. Now, Sir, upon this occasion, I put the question to the hon. gentleman: Which statement is true? Was it the statement of Mr. Blaine that it was not he who had sought for a conference, or was it the statement of hon. gentlemen that it was Mr. Blaine who had sought for a conference? Sir, upon this point we have the evidence of Sir Charles Tupper himself who went to Washington before he went to England, and going to Washington in order to have a conference, he was placed in the humiliating position that he had to confess that the impression which had been conveyed to the Canadian public was a false impression. We have a letter of Sir Charles Tupper, addressed to the late Sir John A. Macdonald, explaining his interview with Mr. Blaine, in which he said:

I told Mr. Blaine that I wished, in the outset, to recognize the accuracy of the statement contained in his letter to Sir Julian Pauncefote, which I had seen, in reference to the initiation of negotiations regarding reciprocal trade arrangements between the two countries.

The first thing which he had to do was to tell Mr. Blaine that what he had been stating in Canadian assemblies, that the impression which had been conveyed, was false, and he had to make a recantation before he could be heard. No man in the position of Mr. Blaine, having the respect, not only of his own nation, but the respect of himself, would have consented to treat with a man who had thus misrepresented him in the eyes of another nation, and so when the men who had made the false representation wished to treat with him at Washington, they first had to retract their statement. Now, I ask why was this humiliating falsehood resorted to? Simply to convey the impression to the Canadian people that the Canadian Minister could obtain a reciprocity treaty at Washington. Sir, this is the extent of the degradation to which a party can descend who wants to obtain power and retain it. We do not fight with such weapons. We have a legitimate ambition to obtain our share of public favour, but by such means we will never seek to raise ourselves. We will fight an honest and an open battle. Sir, power has no attraction for us if it has to be purchased at such a price, and at such a humiliation. Sir, the condition of the country is a grave one, but it is not a desperate one. That the people suffer is evidenced by their action, when, by thousands at a time, they leave the country for a foreign soil; by their action, when,

by thousands they knock at the door of this Parliament in order to obtain redress from the position in which they find themselves. Sir, a remedy could easily be found if the Government would consent to listen, not to the voice of passion and greed, but to the voice of reason and justice; a remedy could be found in the decrease of taxation and in the extension of our market. Let the Canadian public, let the Canadian farmers and toilers be relieved from the load under which they are now groaning; leave them an open field

for their energy and their courage, and at once all the discontent which now prevails in the land will disappear, and then, and not until then, will we enjoy in this country a satisfactory prosperity, substantial and real, and recognized by the people themselves.

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## OTTAWA

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